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COLLECTOR

A LETTER TO THOMAS B. BOWDISH, M. D., E.
C. WOODBURY, FATHER

A

LETTER

TO

THOMAS E. BOND, A. M., M. D.,

ON

HOMEOPATHY,

OCCASIONED BY THE PUBLICATION OF HIS ADDRESS TO THE GRADUATES
AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, ON 3D MARCH, 1851.

BY

J. SCHMIDT.

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Medicinae scientia plus quam aliâ eget obtemperantiâ tam linguæ
quam mentis ; ac iste Medicus est verus qui nec iracundus nec acer,
sed alterius auscultator lenis, Minervam potiusquam Junonem colit
Jac. Fabrar. Dissert. de Morbis Medicorum.

LETTER.

SIR,

My attention has recently been called to a pamphlet purporting to be an Address delivered by yourself on 3d of March last, to the Graduating Class of Washington University, in this city; in which you denounce in harsh and immoderate terms, the Homœopathic Practice of Medicine. That you should wish to retain your pupils within the pale of the old orthodoxy, to which you have been habituated, is quite natural; and the means made use of to effectuate such a wish, quite a matter of taste. Had you chosen to confine your warnings and advice to oral instruction, however emphatic might have been your phraseology, and however discordant with the calm and dignified exposition of a Teacher, no one, I presume, would have disturbed themselves about the matter. But when, transgressing the limits of preceptoral intercourse, you choose a solemn public occasion for your scene, and a mixed assembly for your auditory, in an attempt to ridicule a method of Practice, whose aims are equally philanthropic with your own, and whose pharmacy accords better than yours with the modern developments of science; and when more than this, you print and disseminate your invective; you cannot be surprised that some one of those assailed, should be prompted to inquire into the justification of your intolerance, and to point out to that Public, whom you have gratuitously undertaken to enlighten, how little ground or excuse you have had in coming before it.

This, Sir, is what I am inclined and purpose to do. But in the brief investigation that I shall make of the claims you advance, not for a particular *class* of men, but for a particular *school*, to be the only depository of learning and wisdom, I shall not resort to any recriminations, however tempting may be the opportunity. I shall not stop to particularize the tides and currents of opinion and practice which have made of your school, (if it be, as I suppose you claim, the congregation of the Asclepiades, the assemblage of those who are tenants *de jure* of the healing throne,) a very Egyptian Red Sea to all patients who were not like the children of Israel, under the special protection of Providence. I shall not dwell upon the numerous phases which the science of Medicine, since historic times, will be admitted to have presented—now dogmatic, now empirical, now chemical, now mathematical, at one time positive, at another eclectic, but all the while and at the best, but tentative of truth. Nor shall I pause to indicate the solemn arrogance or hostile acrimony which have been so often displayed by its practitioners towards their patients or towards one another, which have been so amusingly dramatized by Molière from life, in his day, and which do not appear to be quite extinct in our own.

I may, perhaps, in illustration, refer to the almost uniform opposition, or worse, with which new discoveries, sanctified at last by the approval of the Faculty, have been first received; and shall assume throughout, what I think facts will warrant me in doing, the utter uncertainty in which the theory, at least, of medicine is left to this day, in spite of all the contributions to steady it made by its numerous hierophants from Hippocrates down to yourself.

My principal aim will be to show by a few instances, which my occupations otherwise render necessary to be briefly treated, that you have altogether misapprehended Homœopathy in its design and fulfillment; that you have built up a creature of straw which you may have the pleasure of “kicking” about, and finally knocking down; and that all your intellectual flails and cudgels to this

end, your witty quotations and imaginative announcements apply as you yourself confess, to a *shadow* and, as I think it will be seen, to a shadow of your own conjuration.

What may have been your precise motive in indulging in this creative and destructive exercise, is of no particular interest to be known. I am quite willing to admit, for I sincerely hope that it is an honest and conscientious one. And I admit it the more readily when I see diatribes equally furious and unsparing, addressed by one to another of such as you cannot refuse to recognize among your professional brethren or patriarchs. So habitual have this warmth and emphasis become, that one might fairly suppose it to be a part of the teaching of your school, or a diathesis of your profession—if not properly a disease, at least an idiosyncracy of the Faculty. And so harmless has habit made it, that these characteristic ebullitions are looked upon more as exhibitions than events—a sort of *summer-lightning*, which betokens destruction of equilibrium somewhere, but is for the spectator more picturesque than dangerous.

It is just possible that among the mixed motives which were at work during the composition of your address, an idea of the pressing reality and (it may be) future triumphs of the system you denounce, was influential. Such a lurking apprehension of disaster from this quarter, is by no means inconsistent with the industry with which you repeat aloud and would fain persuade yourself that Homœopathy is only a shadow. Had this been your robust conviction, undisturbed by any qualm, it would hardly have been necessary to devote two pages to its discussion; people hardly disturb themselves so much about what they believe a nonentity.

If this be so, then it is possible that a certain dread has served to stimulate your energies and sharpen your quill; the pathos which is shed over the anticipated ill-success, the superseding and discarding of your pupils, will then have been fore-shadowing and sympathetic.

But whatever may have been this dread, and however dark the shadow that fell across your gaze upon the Allopathic horizon, it

is very clear that you have not understood the *substance* of that which caused and cast it: you have not studied Homœopathy. Indeed, *a priori*, and upon your own statements, you could not have been expected to have done so. I certainly have no interest or desire, independently of this discussion, that you should do so now or hereafter: but it appears to me the Public to whom you appeal have a right to expect that you should first inform yourself upon a topic, before you proceed to expose it to them and insist that they should join you in its condemnation.

However this may be, I protest against your version of Homœopathy, not as uncharitable only, but as untrue. The likelihood of this last characteristic follows the more readily, independently of the proofs that I shall presently offer, when it is considered that if you were to undertake an exposition of the principles of your own school, which of course you have studied, and which it is fair to presume you understand, it is highly probable, that three out of five of your own professional brethren would be found, more or less overtly criticising your performance, and denouncing your forwardness, or denying your competency to be the *minister et interpres* of Æsculapian science. It is not for me to say whether in this they would be right or wrong; but I confidently leave it to my readers to say, when such will be your probable fate in expounding a science that you have studied, what your fate ought to be in attempting to expound one that you have *not* studied.

I have spoken hitherto of your “version” and your “exposition” of Homœopathy; and I have done so out of mere courtesy. In fact you have given neither version nor exposition which is intelligible to any one, not even I expect to yourself. You have dealt only in generalities the most vague, in assertions the most round, in metaphysicalities too intangible for argument and too absurd for wit; you have not given your readers the slightest clue as to what this dreadful and accursed heresy is, as to what Homœopathy professes to do or how it professes to do it; and you seem to think that you have most satisfactorily wound up the topic, when you have given an unhappy parody of an Homœopathic axiom—the

more unhappy for your own credit, since it only exists as a parody at the expense of Latinity.

But I do not mean to imitate your tactics; I shall not deal in generalities, but shall hold you to particulars.

You say for instance, in the outset, that Homœopathy is but “a mere *name*.” Well, what in the same sense, is Allopathy, but a *name*? Is Medicine, in the same sense, anything but a name? Is Science more?

Again, what is a *name*? A name is generally understood to be a sign, oral or written, of a thing signified. *Words* then, which are *names* of things, or attributes or actions, are *signs*. But you say that Homœopathy is “a word which is *not a sign*”!! Truly, this is a curious word, possessing in your account most remarkable properties, unshared by any others known to grammarians. If your readers accept what you say about it, it must vastly pique their appetite to explore.

But their exploration, if carried on under your guidance, would, I fear, quickly bring them up all standing. For in the very next breath to having said that Homœopathy is *not a sign*, you call it a *minus*, which, both technically and æsthetically and in any possible definition, *is a sign*, and never was any thing else. Can any thing be more dispiriting to a pupil, then such dreary contradictions and uncertainties?—anything more discreditable to the guide, than not to know North from South, now to be looking for the Pole-star among the Pleiades, now confounding Arcturus with Orion?

But again, you inform us that Homœopathy is an *abracadabra*, and moreover “*fashionable*.” *Hinc illae lacrimae!* But unfortunately for your analogy, you run counter here again to the definition of ordinary persons; and if you will refer us to the authority for saying that this “ponderous polysyllable” was ever pronounced over luxated joints, you will furnish an antiquarian trait that has escaped the acumen of Grotfend.

As to the alliterative wit of your friendly cobbler, I need only quote the Greek passage with which you are, without doubt, fami-

liar, as perfectly appropriate and conclusive. "Οὐχ ἀν ἐνὶ μαννοφόρος γοῆσει κόβαλον σοφύλαξις σὺνφεν. (Joh. Chrysurg.; Postill. min. super divers. Maniae form. cap. 23.) I think you will find that the cobbler has lead you into another unfortunate inconsistency, in causing you to admit that Homœopathy is not "*ideal*"; ergo, as most logicians would argue, it must be *real*; and the friends of the practice must be infinitely obliged for your charitable refusal, on legitimate grounds, to call it any longer "*monstrous*."

But they cannot be so tolerant of the fastidiousness which shrinks from "*peddling* about little pillicules." What is the difference between "*little pillicules*" and "*big pills*," so far as the trade is concerned, that is not greatly to the advantage of the former? And do you not perceive that your elegant allusion to "*peddling*" is a slur less upon Homœopaths than upon all the rural practitioners of your own school? Do they not go about, daily and nightly, like so many Doctor Slops, with their saddle-bags clattering beneath them? And if fortune, less kind or more blind, had cast your lot in a country practice, would you not have congratulated yourself upon any development of ingenuity or skill which would lessen the size of your portable pharmacy? Would you not have plumed yourself upon a method of rendering it inaudible and invisible?

Peddling about in pillicules, indeed! Why, Sir, how are diseases to be cured without medicines? How would the country surgeon look, after riding ten miles to see a patient agonized for three hours, if he had come without his tools? How would the country physician feel at finding he had left in his shop at home, just the drug or drugs that might relieve his patient, while perhaps nature may succumb before he can ride back and return? What would a mother in Harford County, for example. think, if her family physician addressed her at the bedside of a sick child, thus: "My dear Madam, this is a bad case, a very bad case! but I cannot afford to '*peddle in pillicules*,' it would be altogether unsuitable for a graduate of Washington University, as I have been publicly

taught by my Professor, to spread plasters or soil his fingers in blood. These functions are part of the trade that we leave to persons like the Homœopaths. *We* only give advice ; and my advice is that you send down to Baltimore to Mr. Monsarrat, this little recipe I give you, which he will put up with great neatness, and that you also employ Mr. Gill to come up, who will cup this young lady in the most approved manner!" "But Doctor," says the half distracted mother, "is there no medicine that you can give my poor child to relieve her till the Baltimore messenger returns ?—ah ! see what pain she suffers !" "Madam," solemnly responds the *Æsculapius*, faithful to his system (as you would prescribe it,) "I only give advice, I do not peddle in pillicules !" Such, Sir, would be the dialogue with one of your pupils, if he duly appreciated your lofty delicacy and viewed with horror like yours, the trade of "peddling."

Why, it is only the luxurious facilities of city-practice that enable any of your school to dispense with the process of "peddling" the material of their own prescriptions. Patients know that they can get from a neighboring pharmacy the prescribed drugs, about as quickly as the medical man could compound them extemporaneously himself, more artistically and satisfactorily composed, and of more reliable quality ; and they are, therefore, content to dispense with the physician whose manipulations are frequently clumsy enough, in favor of the apothecary who is trained to the business and who, from that very training, is a much better judge of the purity and identity of the article.

This last is a very important particular which has contributed much to the growth of pharmaceutic establishments and the business of the apothecary. It is a fact, I believe—and however discreditable and deplorable, not less the fact—that many Graduates leave your schools without such a knowledge of practical pharmacy as would render them safe agents in the compounding of medicines which they may be more or less competent to prescribe. And I suspect that more than one of those, whose preëminent competency in prescription is admitted by their patients and their fra-

ternity, would willingly demit an application made to him by a family where he was visiting, to decide upon the purity of a drug, to his favorite, or even any respectable apothecary. No doubt, his patients should thank him for this dissidence, in some cases; but it is not the less in all cases a shirking of responsibility and an acknowledgment of incompetency which when least confessed, exists the most.

The Homœopathic practice divides the responsibility not at all: the prescriber of the medicine exhibits and administers his own preparation, or materials which he has himself procured from he knows where. The patient has all the encouragement which the presence and guarantee of his or her medical adviser can give; and if an imaginative person or nervous, is not harassed as under Allopathic city-practice, by the haunting fear that the apothecary's apprentice—only beginning to learn the rudiments, or bewildered by the opposition of your barbarous Latin terms to the chemical nomenclature he may have been taught, and in either character often puzzled by the slovenliness, real or affected, of the hand-writing of the recipe—may have put up oxalic acid for Epsom salts, or arsenic for powdered chalk.

Again, and still looking to effects upon the sense and nerves of the patient, the “pillicules” of Homœopathy, suggestive of nothing disagreeable, admit of being carried in a pocket-book, which may be scanned without disgust in the most luxurious boudoir; while the massive boluses and pulverulent aggregates and copious solutions of Allopathy, often more or less odorant, and that not always with scents of Araby, can only be conveyed in a complicated structure of leather and wood and iron-mongery, which in virgin beauty presents nothing very attractive, and chafed and weather-stained as it soon becomes, would seem to be only fitting furniture for a harness-room or an adjunct of veterinary skill.

I think now, that so far as “peddling” is concerned, all the odium and disgrace that you would cast upon a physician's carrying with him his own medicines, applies more unfortunately to your own brethren in country-practice than to Homœopaths; as for the

dispensation which your city-bretthren enjoy in this respect, it is a thing to be grateful for, but by no means, considering all the circumstances, to be proud of. So much for "peddling about;" as to the "pillicules," I shall refer to them again.

In continuing your charges, you say, "Homœopathy avowedly contends with diseases beyond materiality." It would have been better for your own sake to have left out the "avowedly"; for you would find it extremely difficult to verify this phrase. Neither Hahnemann nor Hering have ever made such an avowal; nor, as far as my knowledge extends, any other Homœopathic writer. Indeed it would have been as inconsistent and impossible for them to have done so, as it would be for you to affirm precisely the same thing of your own school. On the contrary, the charge made heretofore against Homœopathy, by antagonists better studied and better furnished as to facts than you appear to be, was, that it led to *Materialism*; which last charge I do not admit any more than I do yours; and I only adduce them together to show that both cannot be right and probably neither.

If you mean that Homœopathy claims to have been sucessful in certain disorders, which your ponderous medicines have failed to reach,—such as epilepsy, derangement of the optic nerves, some phases of hemiplegia and the like—it does not follow that these diseases are *immaterial*.

I rather expect however, that you would decline contending this point, and would admit, if you thought you could do so gracefully, that your sweeping generality about the *immaterial* warfare of Homœopathy, was introduced merely to point a phrase and edge a sarcasm. I am induced to believe so the more from the context, where the motive and effect are more plain. You say for instance, that "its medicines elude analysis." Have you ever attempted any analysis? Can you name any one competent chemist who has made a similar attempt without full success? Again, you say "their bulk defies the microscope." Now in fact the diameter of the "pillicules," varies from $\frac{1}{75}$ to $\frac{1}{15}$ of an inch. We do not usually resort to a microscope at all, to determine dimensions of a magni-

tude like these; and you will doubtless yourself admit that the phrase of “defial” is only a *fagon de parler*, and not meant to be literally accurate.

The same effort at point and emphasis, unfortunately betrays itself further as you go on—the same habitude of designating things simple and harmless, in recherché and striking terms. Thus you speak of an “*animalculoid* practice” (the only authority upon which, in one sense, would be Ehrenberg, and the only reference of which in any other sense, would be to certain views propounded some years since by Dieffenbach, upon purulent phthisis;) of being “fearfully unsuccessful;” of being “lashed out” by the whip of conscience; and the like.

There is one phrase to which more serious objection might be taken, viz: that of medical men *trading* in a practice. But as this is equally hard upon either system of Practice, and as, so far as it implies anything contemptuous of the practitioners, it bears harder upon your own school, wherein as there are more practitioners, there must of necessity be more mere traders, I do not feel particularly called upon to rebuke more pointedly what no one will consider a polished expression. I shall rather consider the gist of the logic of which this expression is among others the vehicle.

You affirm that the “few” medical men who have taken up the new trade of Homœopathy, have given up their old trade of Allopathy, because they found its practice disastrous to their patients; and you infer from this a very dubious recommendation of the practitioners. Now, without stopping to question the accuracy of the fact as you state it, it would appear to most persons that the course of these medical men is strictly in accord with the sense and habits of mankind; and that they have acted, on your hypothesis, in a very natural and becoming manner, i. e. they have first experienced the defects of the old Practice, and then have sought to remedy them in a new one. Is not this the only salutary ground and sane course of all reforms? Is it not in this sense that necessity is the mother of invention? People do not seek to reform that which they think needs no change. It is only when a

particular habit or mode or system, is found inadequate, inconvenient, or evil, that any one is impelled to suggest alterations. And alterations thus suggested, so far from implying a dubious recommendation, come with all the force of a double experience.

By your own admission, then, the medical men who practice Homœopathy, have acted with all due caution. Whether they have acted with all due prudence, and have adopted the new system upon sufficiently just or probable grounds, is another question, which neither your assertion nor mine are competent to settle. Yours is not enough, on the one side, because, for all that appears, you have not studied the other; and whatever qualities of acute perception and solid judgment you may possess, they are manifestly inapplicable to any case with the facts in which you have not made yourself conversant. Your plain prepossessions would render you, in this case, an unreliable witness; how much more an unjust judge!

Nor, for reason like this last, do I pretend to claim the right of competent judgment for any other person than myself. I admit, that my convictions are long ago settled, and are confirmed, if possible, by daily experience. But I cannot expect nor do I wish that others should be influenced by my mere assertions. And all that I desire, in this respect, is that others will judge for themselves, *upon the facts as they exist*, undistorted by professional prejudices and uncolored by party declamations.

The Public, in fact, will so judge for themselves; and as laypersons in general can be as little expected as prepared to go through the process of a calm scientific investigation, this Public to whom we both appeal, will probably take a shorter way to a conclusion, by estimating the character and means of those persons by whom the new system has been originated or advocated, and will thence infer the probabilities of such persons having arrived at correct conclusions, or otherwise. It is in this aspect, then, that I mean to present the case; by inquiring, *what are the chances that persons, intellectually and otherwise fitted and accomplished, like Hahnemann and some of his more prominent followers, would,*

in comparing the merits of different systems of therapeutics, decide rightly. It will be admitted, that I am stating the case here in the most calm and impartial manner. I by no means intend to enumerate even the persons whose chances of accuracy are to be considered, I shall content myself with indicating the line of investigation to be pursued.

Who then was Hahnemann, the originator of the system? A man of more than usual intellectual endowments, of vast capacity for knowledge, high in rank for important additions to chemical science, and whose more than octogenarian prolongation of life, was at length terminated with a reputation undimmed and a character that was growing in brilliancy. But I prefer that others should speak of him; and I quote therefore, the language of Dr. John Forbes, late the Editor of the British and Foreign Medical Review, (a journal of extensive circulation and high standing, I believe,) one of the editors of another work of repute, the Cyclopædia of Practical Medicine, and for aught I know, of other still more important contributions to your art. "No careful observer," says Dr. Forbes, "or candid reader of his [Hahnemann's] writings can hesitate for a moment to admit that he was a very extraordinary man—one, whose name will descend to posterity as the exclusive excogitator and founder of an original system of Medicine, as ingenious as many that preceded it, and destined to be the remote, if not the immediate cause of more important fundamental changes in the practice of the healing art, than have resulted from any promulgated, since the days of Galen himself. Hahnemann was undoubtedly, a man of genius and a scholar, a man of indefatigable industry, of undaunted energy. In the history of Medicine, his name will appear in the same list with those of the greatest systematists and theorists; surpassed by few in the originality and ingenuity of his views, superior to most in having substantiated and carried out his doctrine into actual and most extensive practice." Dr. Forbes then goes on to point out the natural causes of the opposition which his announcements met with among Medical men, and which he says, "has up to this day prevented common justice being done to the new sys-

tem and to its author and his successors. By most medical men it was taken for granted that the system was one, not only visionary in itself, but was the result of a mere fanciful hypothesis, disconnected with facts of any kind and supported by no processes of ratiocination or logical influence; while its author and his apostles and successors were looked upon either as visionaries or quacks, or both. And yet nothing can be further from the truth. Whoever examines the Homœopathic doctrine as announced and expounded in the original writings of Hahnemann and many of his followers, must admit, not only that the system is an ingenious one, but that it professes to be based upon a most formidable array of facts and experiments, and that these are woven into a complete code of doctrine with singular dexterity and much apparent fairness. And it is but an act of simple justice to admit, that there exist no grounds for doubting that Hahnemann was as sincere in his belief of the truth of his doctrines, as any of the medical systematists who have preceded him, and that many at least among his followers, have been and are, sincere, honest and learned men. That there are charlatans and impostors among the Practitioners of Homœopathy cannot be doubted: but, alas, can it be doubted any more that there are such, and many such, among the professors of orthodox physic?"

So far Doctor Forbes. The question is, looking upon the whole result merely as a chance, whether Hahnemann, thus fitted by natural and acquired endowments, had not as fair a chance as any one since the days of Hippocrates, of stumbling upon the truth. For my own part, although I will not say, *Malo cum tali errare quam cum aliis pergere rectè*, I must insist that the probabilities are more in favor of a single system so devised by such a person, than of the eclectic patchwork that claims the mitre of orthodoxy.

I forbear to adduce the consideration of other collaborators, countrymen of Hahnemann, whose reputation, however well established in Germany, may not enjoy the same prestige here. I will refer next to one whose inquiry is written in the English tongue—I mean Dr. Henderson, Professor of Medicine and General Pathology in

the University of Edinburg. I confess that I have had neither the impulse nor the opportunity of informing myself upon the antecedents of Dr. Henderson. I take the distinguished post which he was called to fill, as evidence, also, of distinguished ability. It is true that Dr. Henderson may, by some afflictive dispensation of Providence, have lost the learning and judgment which entitled him to his promotion; he may have become stolid or phrenesied. But is this likely? And until not only the likelihood, but the fact is proved, are not his chances for arriving at the truth as fair as those of (I do not say the *turba communis* of practitioners, whose names are never heard beyond the ward in which they practice, but) other medical men holding a similar professional rank? And is not the testimony of such a person, on which side soever it may be, worth the suffrages of ten thousand of those whose only claim to speak to the matter at all, is that they write M. D. to their names, and whose scholarly faculties are not much beyond the prescribed symbol of *fiat haustus*, i. e. drink it down?

One more reference, and I am done under this head. It is to Doctor Tessier, Physician to one of the Wards (S. Margaret's Hospital) of the Hotel-Dieu in Paris. This gentleman, after having attained a respectable individual repute, which he more than sustained in his present responsible official position as a practitioner of the old school, applied himself to compare it experimentally with the new. The result is an unequivocal and emphatic assimal of the superiority of the latter. Is it possible that Dr. Tessier has undergone a metamorphosis of so curious a character, such a divided or double identity, as leaves him a safe and judicious guide while he leans to Allopathy, but blinds and cripples his intellect when he would consider Homœopathy?

Such a question applies to all who have left the old school for the new: are they or are they not the same men—intelligent, acute sincere,—afterwards as before? It would be a prejudiced assumption, which logic does not admit nor even tolerate to suppose that *ipse facto* the acceptance of Homœopathy implied a decay in the acceptor's faculties, or tainted their judgment so as to make it unre-

liable. This would be to convert divers persons, whose names History will religiously preserve, into Pariahs. It would be to accept in its worst sense the paradoxism *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*: especially when not even the *post hoc* has been proved.

I have only further to say in connection with this whole tissue of probabilities which I think the Public will see to be quite weighty on the side of Homœopathy, that if your school had such unobjectionable and unequivocal witnesses as, for instance, Hahnemann, Henderson and Tessier *against* Homœopathy instead of *for* it, they would have been paraded with much more pomp, and probably with more skill and effect, than they have been here.

For "the other way of accounting for their unfortunate results" under the old Practice, which you intimate, (viz: their individual incapacity or ignorance,) will not apply to such as I have mentioned and to many more, who as long as they belonged to the old school were regarded among its lights and teachers.

To continue now the sequence of your remarks, it may be observed, that your imaginary advertisement of a new method of Navigation might do for a joke, (although the limits of absurdity are also the boundaries of wit, and this facetious passage is very near these dangerous borders,) but will hardly do for argument. It wants some of the most important logical elements (and wit is essentially logical) viz: analogy and truth. Homœopathy has never suggested any method to save persons from being drowned.

Your explanation of this jocose announcement, however necessary to enable a reader to detect the parallelism and thus enjoy the innuendo, which otherwise might have escaped him, fails in fact to support the analogy still more than your first conception; and your generalizations are precisely the reverse of Homœopathic principles. Thus your hypothetical Homœopath is made to say that "experience is a fallacious guide." The charge usually made against the school, is that of relying too much upon experience. But however this last may be, one of the aphorisms of Hahnemann is, that *there are patients, but no diseases*. This, by the way, is strikingly like the maxim of Hippocrates: but to whomsoever its

paternity is to be ascribed, it certainly cannot be to one who rejects or undervalues experience.

Your imaginary Homœopath is made to add, that "*physical science is not applicable.*" This applause of physical science comes with peculiar grace from a follower of your school, whose very Pharmacopœias still retain, with obstinate predilection, the nomenclature and formulæ that modern Chemistry has long since discarded. And its depreciation is singularly *mal à propos* charged against Hahnemann, who, of all physiologists and pathologists, was the most of a chemist, and who of all chemists was the most of a physician. And it is applied with like ill-fortune against the system itself, the principle of whose Pharmacy is founded upon the most brilliant discovery of the present century—the atomic proportions of matter—and whose practice is strictly in conformity with what the most enlightened physical philosophers maintain, viz: the infinite divisibility, and action and reaction thereto proportionate, of matter. If I were disposed to retort upon you, Sir, with jest instead of reason, I might say that you appear to have confounded the meaning of *physics* with that of the vernacular *physic*.

You affirm with apparent seriousness that these unfortunate illustrations (which, for your aim, partake more of tragedy than comedy) are not a caricature, nor even an exaggerated exposition, of Homœopathy. They certainly bear no more resemblance to Homœopathy than they do to Theology; so that in one sense (but not the one you meant) your words are literally true. But in all other senses they betray (as it is not to be supposed that you could make a wilful mis-statement) what I have already had occasion to observe, a profound want of information—I might almost say a supreme disregard—as to what Homœopathy is, or as to what it professes to be.

It betrays further, to say the least, a want of memory as to the later, and of appreciation as to the possible, achievements of physical science which you would fain claim alone for the orthodox school. The very terms of your imaginary advertisement (leaving

out but the three last words) would have met, a century ago, the contempt you suppose it liable to now; and yet it is substantially realized and literally realizable at this day !

It is a very unsafe state of mind, however comfortable it may be, to disbelieve and deny the possibility of a "*sumpsimus*," because in the mass-book we have been taught it stands "*mumpsimus*." For instance, if thirty years ago it had been announced that a perfect likeness of an individual could be taken on metal or on paper, in a few minutes, without the aid of a limner, you would, I am warranted to suppose, have disbelieved it. Yet at that very time Niepce had been laboring, solitary and unencouraged, to perfect his idea ; in due season Daguerre came in to help and Talbot to extend ; and now the thing is done at twenty places in our midst.

So, if twenty years ago, any one had announced that a perfect metallic matrix of any cast could be produced in no long time by invisible agency, without the concurrence of pressure or fusion or metal, you and such as you would have most likely ridiculed the idea ; for had not Davy lived and died, and Faraday already assumed his patron's place and more, without finding out these *magnalia naturæ*? And yet Jacobi and De la Rive were even then on the point of realizing it ; and now, chemist and artisan do the very thing daily !

And so if then or a little later, any one had said that a possibility existed and a method could be contrived, for sending an intelligible message and receiving an intelligible answer between Baltimore and Philadelphia in less than one minute, you would have been bound by your present position to repudiate its feasibility. Yet Steinheil, Bain and Morse have achieved it, as you may realize to-morrow.

The man of true science doubts nothing—ridicules nothing but the existence of matter without a GOD !

I have been detained so long upon the points which I have already handled, that I shall, for the present at least, pass over some others that I had intended to notice, as incidentally connected with what you have said ; such as for example, the profound uncer-

tainty, admitted by your oldest and best teachers, as to the mode on which your allopathic medicines act—the necessary inertness or worse of a large portion of the masses which you exhibit—the consequent vagueness and darkness of your whole system ; and, among other things, the singular yet uniform hostility manifested in the hierarchy of the orthodox against any attempt to rend the sacred veil that habit and prejudice have woven for their shrine.

Topics like these would be fruitful and piquant themes in the hands of a controversialist ; but I spare them the more readily, because they would savor of recrimination, which it has been my effort to avoid. I have rather contented myself with standing on the defensive, and showing how little ground or justification you had for your uncalled-for attack upon Homœopathy.

Homœopathy, indeed, prefers such a course and is served by it. It can afford to bide its time. The patient Public will, in due season, weary of assisting at human sacrifices, and will demand in tones too emphatic to be mistaken or disobeyed, a Reform in the effete systems of Medical Practice. Already such a reform is silently working : by and by, it will leaven the mass.

These are my convictions ; but I cannot expect that you should entertain them, disagreeable as they must be and repulsive to all your prepossessions, upon any declamation of mine. There is, however, an easy way of settling the question definitely for this community at least, to which I am ready to contribute my part ; and for which, if you and your orthodox professional brethren are, as I must suppose, only desirous to confirm the truth and eliminate error, I may reasonably expect you to be equally ready. Let a ward in some public Hospital or Infirmary, be set apart for Homœopathic treatment, to which patients may be admitted upon their own choice, or in any other manner that will secure a fair average of cases. The statistical tables of twelve months' results, will show, better than dozens of essays or hundreds of unqualified assertions, which system is the best for the Public and for the preservation of human life. The refusal to co-operate in a fair trial like this, will hardly serve as an argument in favor of Allopathy.

In conclusion, Sir, it is proper to say, that although I have addressed you individually, as I was warranted to do from the fact of publication of your address, none of my remarks are meant to have a particular personal application or to be inconsistent with the relations which, as those of utter strangers, exists between us. I have only further to express the hope that, when you next think fit to discuss Homœopathy, it will be (for your own sake,) upon more knowledge and on surer grounds: and to remain, Sir,

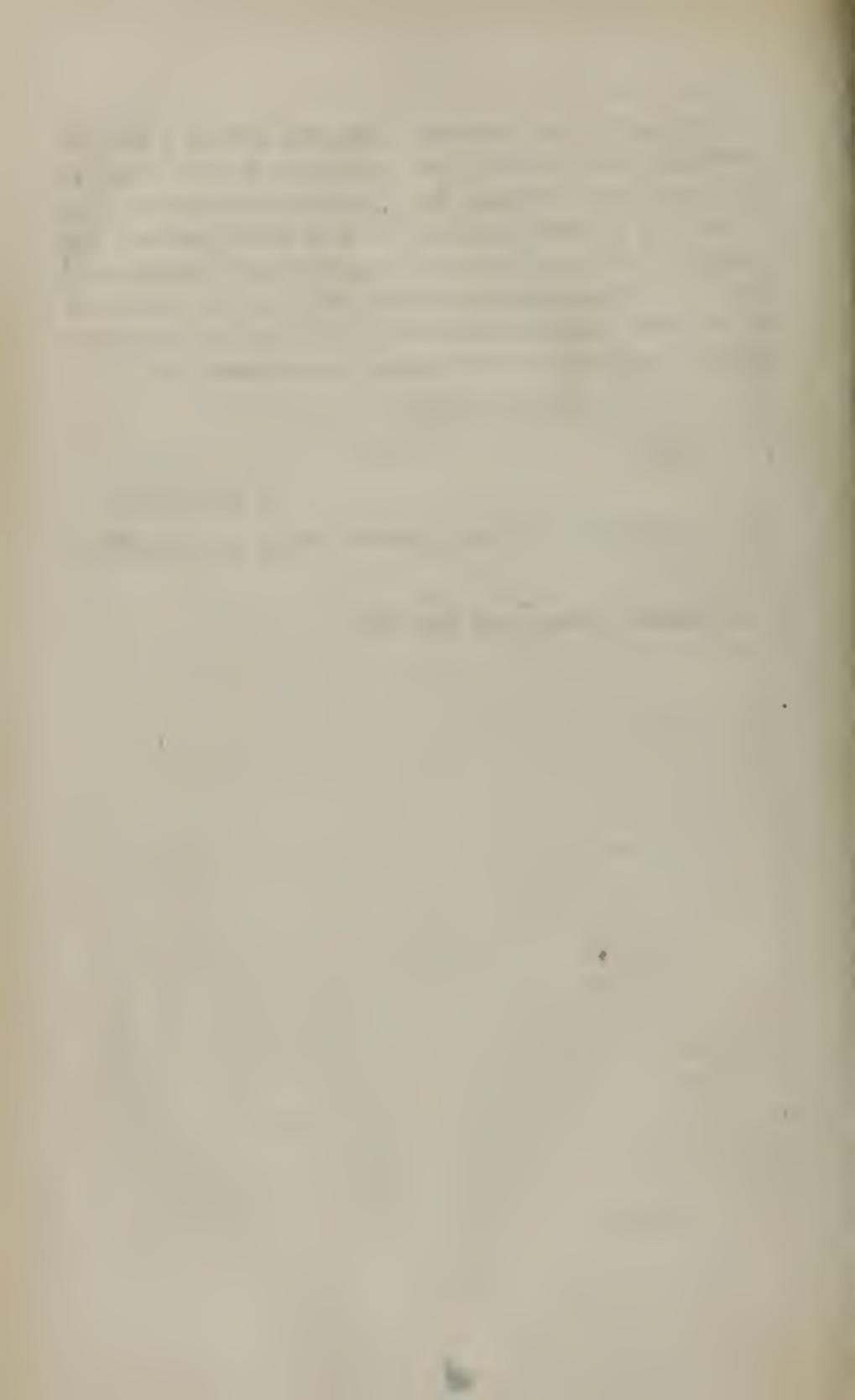
With due respect,

Yours,

J. SCHMIDT,

Member of the North American Institute of Homœopathy.

54 Liberty st., Baltimore, 4th May, 1851.



A

L E T T E R

TO

THOMAS E. BOND, A. M., M. D.,

ON

H O M E O P A T H Y,

OCCASIONED BY THE PUBLICATION OF HIS ADDRESS TO THE GRADUATES
AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, ON 3D MARCH, 1851.

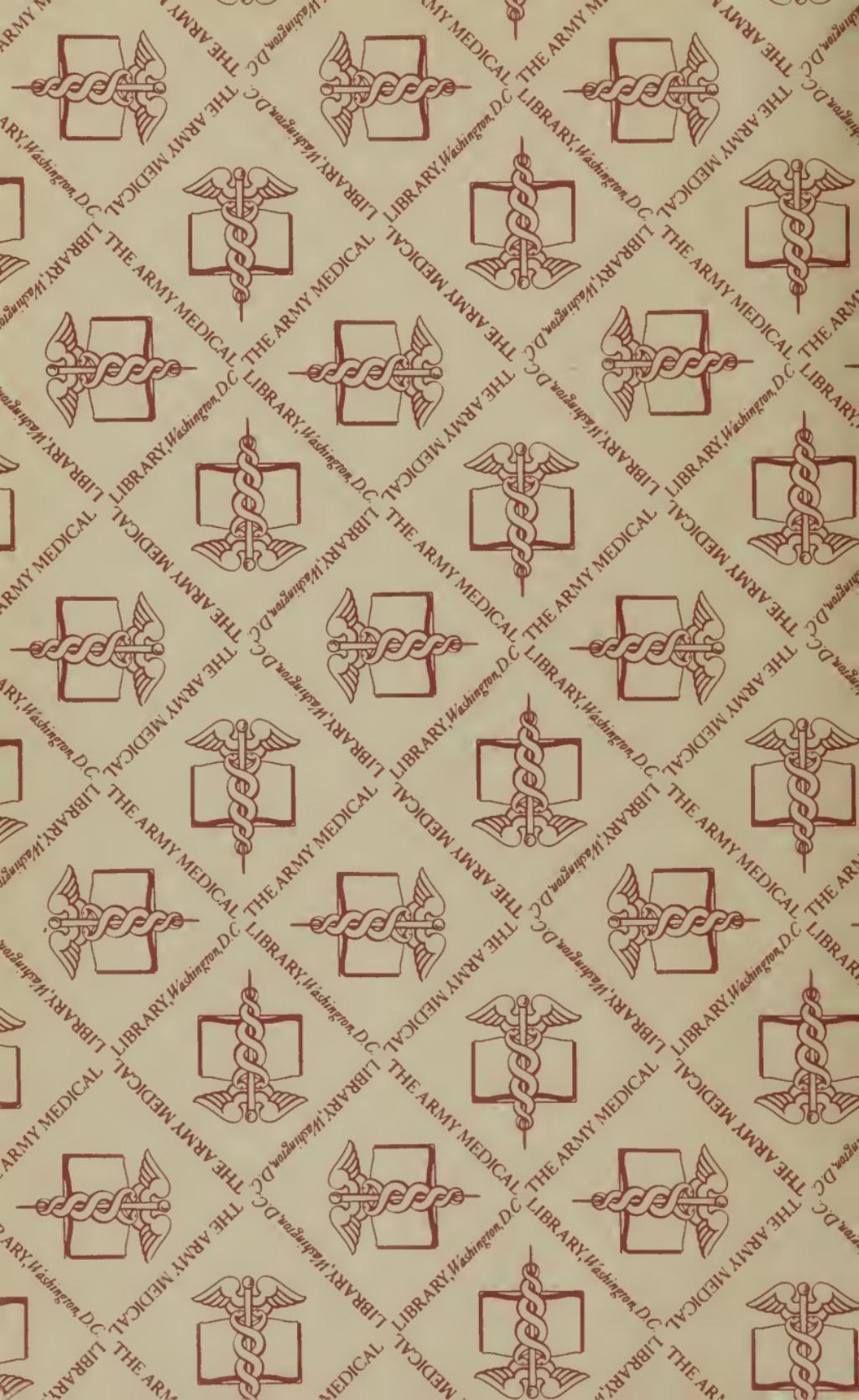
BY

J. SCHMIDT.

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